

Pres. ch. in Canada. 16

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# PRESBYTERIAN UNION :

A HELP TO THE

INTELLIGENT DISCUSSION OF THE QUESTION.

BY AN ELDER.



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## PRESBYTERIAN UNION.

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### INTRODUCTORY.



WHAT is called a "Basis of Union" has been sent down to the Presbyteries, Kirk Sessions and Congregations of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland. The vagueness of the statements contained in the articles embodied in the "Basis" is such, that many of those who are most strongly opposed to the project may have some difficulty in meeting the plausible arguments founded on this document for a junction of the interests of the different Presbyterian bodies in the Dominion. It must be remembered, that it is not merely to obtain the assent of Congregations to the theoretical statements contained in the Articles, that they are sent down by Synod. That assent to abstract propositions is to be made use of to bring about the abolition of the branch of the Church of Scotland in Canada. Such a consummation has for some time been aimed at, by a small section of the members of Synod, who, by bringing up their demands year after year, and by other means, have been insidiously sapping the strength of the Church. By the careful concealment of the real grounds of difference between the Presbyterian bodies in the articles sent down for adoption, those who conscientiously desire to maintain the existence of their Church, have been made to appear as factious bigots, prejudiced and narrow in their views. It is on many grounds, therefore, desirable that the true nature and bearing of the proposals may be understood, and the ground taken by those who

intend to adhere to their Church, whatever difficulties they may encounter, may be fully appreciated.

In discussing this grave and serious question, it is necessary to glance at the steps which preceded the schism in Canada. It has been the common argument with those who insist that we should give up our separate existence as a Church, that we, in Canada, have nothing to do with old world notions imported from Scotland or elsewhere. But this objection comes with a bad grace from those who appear by their actions to approve of the conduct of men who rent asunder the United Church in 1844, on grounds utterly unreasonable and most reprehensible. But apart from this, we might as well attempt to write the history of Canada, and leave out all that preceded the year 1867; or the history of the United States, leaving out the events previous to the Revolution, which made, of the thirteen revolted Provinces, an independent nation; or the history of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, blotting out from the volume all the struggles, the heartburnings, the strifes that had marked the years during which they were three separate kingdoms, taking up the tale only after the Act of Union was passed with Ireland. Could any one hope by such a method of writing history to account for the events now passing; for the motives for action which now exist; for the differences of opinion which now prevail? The thing is too monstrously absurd to be seriously discussed. Yet this is what we are asked to do in the present case on grounds equally absurd. It would be like taking a philosophical view of the history and actions of Punch and Judy, leaving out of account the doings of the man behind the checked curtain, who pulls the strings, and sets the puppets in motion. Blot out the past records of the history of Canada, and how easy it might become to argue for the absorption of the Dominion into the neighbouring Republic.

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## I.

## THE SCHISM IN SCOTLAND.

Of the events which preceded the schism in Canada, I shall speak as briefly as possible, yet they cannot be dismissed in a few sparkling phrases, even if I had the talent so to compress them. For many years the Church of Scotland was, in ecclesiastical matters, paramount in her own country. There were other religious bodies, it is true, but they were weak in numbers and influence. As a consequence of this state of things, certain abuses had crept in, and a coldness and apathy existed on the part of too many, laity as well as clergy. Nor is this remarkable. The history of all religious bodies, which have become too powerful to dread control or to fear opposition, proves the rule to be universal. But a new element entered into the mass. The Reform Bill of 1832 roused into more vigorous action the Voluntaries, Dissenters, and other seceding bodies of Presbyterians. The names I use to describe these are not given out of disrespect, such being the titles by which they themselves chose to be known. They believed, that the extension of the suffrage afforded them an opportunity of attacking the Church of Scotland, and of having her disestablished. They united, therefore, for this purpose, but for no other, until some fifteen years after, when they formed what is now known as the United Presbyterian Church. The attack naturally roused the members of the Church of Scotland to defence, and prominent among the defenders were to be found a number of young ministers, who in many respects closely resembled the Ritualists of the Church of England. There was the same fiery zeal, not always tempered with discretion; the same priestly assumption; the same exalted idea of the respect which was due by others to the office they held; the same belief that they were the chosen of the earth, and that all civil and social laws must bend to their authority. What gave power to both was their evident sincerity and energy;

both had the same weakness—a strong and pervading belief that their office freed them from responsibilities to which other men are subject. The High Church Party of the Church of Scotland did not confine themselves purely to the defence. They carried on offensive operations against her opponents; denounced Voluntaries as infidels, and pronounced on those who differed from them in opinion as to the Scriptural sanction for Church establishments, the sentence of eternal condemnation, as they subsequently did on the Ministers of the Church of Scotland, when they themselves had left her pale. I would speak with all respect of these men, who were no doubt sincere; but sincerity is no proof of the truth, otherwise how could the testimony be resisted of the Hindoo devotees, who endure, for the sake of their religion, tortures almost, it would seem, too great for human endurance? No doubt in all sincerity, they falsely arrogated to themselves the exclusive claim to the credit for all the progress made by the Church of Scotland, and exclaimed as they left the venerable Assembly Halls in 1843, that they saw the Shekinah remove, and the Spirit of God depart from the desecrated sanctuary. These are the recorded words of the men who declared the Church of Scotland to be a moral pestilence, and the one man to be avoided in every parish, as foul and tainted with the leprosy of sin, to be the Parish Minister. Such men, in spite of their assertions to the contrary, were not the only Ministers of the Church of Scotland who worked for her spiritual advancement. There were others as good, as earnest as they, but with more judgment; as zealous, but with more discretion. The subsequent history of the Church proves this beyond dispute.

The movement consequent on the Reform Bill brought into existence two parties in the Church, and the question of patronage was brought into prominence by the attacks of those who opposed all church establishments, and sought for the weakest points. It is not to be denied that there were evils connected with the administration of patronage. Yet these might have been removed without contravening the law. The Call from the people had become a nullity, the observance of that preliminary

to settlement not having been enforced. The law was clear, and could have been restored without disturbing the existing order of things. Dr. Chalmers advised, that as the Call had been rendered a nullity, by the decisions given by the General Assembly on individual cases, so by a series of opposite decisions, it could be restored to significance and effect. He proposed that the question should be sent down to Presbyteries, that it might be decided by them what amount of signatures to the Call should be required, and that, acting on their determination, the Supreme Court might establish sound precedents. That would have been a legal course; but he was overruled by others, far less able than he, but more determined to establish the authority of the Church Courts at the expense of the people. The first false step was taken; the Veto Law was passed, by which the power of the parishioners was restricted, and the decision as to the choice of a minister practically put into the hands of the clergy. Under the laws of the land, *all* the parishioners had the right to call or object; under the Veto Law, only the male heads of families being communicants were entitled to be heard. The object of the more violent of the party was to transfer the patronage from the lay patrons to the clergy, a policy which has since been carried out by the Free Church, both in Scotland and in this country. With the same end in view, they tried to secure what was called, in ecclesiastical jargon, the *liberum arbitrium*, which has been justly defined as "a discretionary and "irresponsible power to determine, not judicially, nor according to "any ascertained rule, but arbitrarily in every case." To the Veto Law Dr. Chalmers was greatly opposed, and writing some years after its enactment, when the evils had arisen which he had believed to be inevitable, he said: "The Church came into her "present difficulties, not by my advice, but in opposition to it."

The evil effects of such assumptions were soon felt. In whatever light the law of patronage may be regarded, no man can deny that so long as the law existed its provisions must be obeyed. The patron having presented, the presentee had a right to be put on his trials, and had this been done the whole battle would have been fought out in the Church Courts; no Civil Court would

have ventured to interfere with what, had the views of Dr. Chalmers prevailed, would have been a purely ecclesiastical question. But the leaders in the movement not only refused to follow the safe course he had pointed out ; they took another, and one more dangerous. When he saw that it was determined to pass the Veto Law, he urged, by all the arguments it was in his power to adduce, that they should make immediate application to Government for an Act to sanction the change of law, which he felt it was beyond the power of the Church to make. But this, on the advice of Lord Moncrieff, who unfortunately was allowed to mislead the General Assembly, they refused to do, ostentatiously setting at defiance the laws of the land, which in every free country must be observed by clergy and laity alike, or all liberty is in danger. It is possible that before men's passions became aroused the Veto Law might have been sanctioned. That would not have made it better, but it would have prevented the unseemly contests between the Civil and Ecclesiastical Courts. It would have removed the patronage from the hands of the lay patrons, but would have transferred it to the clergy, a more dangerous body than the other to be entrusted with such powers. Founding upon the Veto Law, when a presentee asked to be put on his trials, the Church Courts might refuse. In such a case he would then, as every man is entitled to do whose civil rights are threatened, apply to the Civil Courts. They would, thereupon, issue injunctions to the Presbytery, *not* to induct the presentee into the charge, as has so often and so falsely been alleged, but to put him on his trials. Had that been done—and, I repeat, that was the course recommended by Dr. Chalmers—no conflict could have arisen. The presentee, if rejected, could have appealed to the Synod, and from that Court an appeal would lie to the General Assembly. Had the Church Courts adhered to the law of the land their action would have been unchallengeable, but they persisted in breaking and disobeying the law of the land, and were compelled to submit, as all other individuals or bodies of men must do. The fight was for an ecclesiastical tyranny on the part of the clergy, carried on under the pretence that it was for the rights of the people. It was resisted by those who held that to

give any body of men the right to say what laws they would or would not obey, was to break down the very foundations of civil liberty.

The *British Quarterly Review*, the organ of the Nonconformists, says, regarding their claims: "They claim not only entire spiritual independence, but the uncontrolled power to determine what "it is that constitutes such independence. Of all the theories that "have been broached on the subject, the theory of the Free Church—"man is the most impracticable, inasmuch as it makes provision, "either for encroachments, at the will of the Church, on the rights "and arrangements of parties who are least of all disposed to submit to such interference, or for perpetual disagreements between "the civil and ecclesiastical powers—a state of things alike inconsistent with the peace of society and the prosperity of religion." These are words worth considering, coming from a publication which has always contended for the fullest freedom in religious matters.

There was another infraction of the law which tended still further to complicate matters. It was found that population had so increased, that church accommodation was not sufficient in the parish churches. A large number of chapels were built, which were subordinate to the parish churches, and became known as Chapels of Ease. As they increased, great inconvenience was found to result from there being no Kirk Sessions attached to them, and, consequently, that the ministers who filled these charges had no seats in the Church Courts. This inconvenience might have been easily and legally remedied, and since the disruption it has to a great extent been removed. A short and inexpensive process before the Court of Teinds, the legal tribunal for erecting new parishes, would have been sufficient for the purpose, and thus the presence in the Church Courts of the ministers and representative elders from the new parishes would have been legally invulnerable and safe from attack. But the same men who insisted on their power to pass the Veto Law also insisted that by their own inherent power they could pass a law giving to chapel ministers the full status of parish ministers. They dignified the chapels with the name of Parish Churches *quoad sacra*, thus establishing

charges with all the worst features of the Voluntary and State Churches, without the excellencies of either. They had as much right, by their own mere motion, to give seats in the Church Courts to the chapel ministers, who were simply town missionaries, acting under instructions from the Kirk Session of the parish in which the work of each lay, as congregations here would have to make their ministers members of Municipal Councils, in defiance of the law of the land. Just as the ratepayers, in the latter case, would plead the illegal constitution of the Council if they objected to a municipal rate, however necessary that rate might be, and however just, had it been legally imposed, so did those whose rights were invaded by illegally constituted Church Courts appeal to the laws of the land. The effect of the illegal constitution of the Church Courts was still more prejudicial. It rendered them helpless to remedy the grossest abuses. Hence arose scandals which did not affect the Church of Scotland alone, but injured the cause of religion itself. Were a minister, notorious as leading an immoral life, to be summoned before one of these illegally-constituted Courts, he would do what every criminal does. He would at once raise the legal objection to its constitution, and apply for protection to the nearest Civil Court having jurisdiction. On proof being presented that men who had no legal right to be there were sitting as members of the Church Court which issued the citation for the party accused to appear before it, the Judge had no alternative but to obey the law laid down for his guidance. He was compelled to issue, as a matter of course, an interdict against further proceedings being taken, and, to the great scandal of religion the accused escaped trial. This was used as part of the stock-in-trade of the non-intrusion agitators. They represented the decision of the Judge as an invasion by the civil power on the spiritual functions of the Church ; as a tearing off of Christ's crown and trampling it in the dust. Godly, honest, simple-minded men, who knew nothing beyond the facts, and these facts only as shown to them through a distorted medium, firmly believed that the Judges of the land were in the habit of sallying out of the Courts over which they presided, and in the most violent manner interfering personally with the actions of the Church Courts.

There could not, of course, be a more ridiculous nor a grosser misrepresentation. The Civil Courts were appealed to, in the cases supposed, on a point of law, and gave their decision as the law directed, in the same way as the Civil Courts here would decide, that a Municipal Council could not legally impose taxes, if there were men sitting at the Council Board who had not been legally elected to do so. No Corporation, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, can usurp illegal powers. That is so plain that it seems a waste of time to discuss such a question. Yet the position taken up by those who seceded from the Church of Scotland in 1843 was this: They attempted to assume powers contrary to the laws of the land, and then proclaimed themselves martyrs, because the law prevented them from carrying their illegal assumptions into effect, and from trampling on the rights of others who did not think like them.

The bitterness of theologians is proverbial, and the contest in the Church of Scotland at this time might serve as a confirmation of the truth of the prevailing belief on this subject. Two hostile camps were formed: the one active, restless, self-asserting and loud in its pretensions; the noise of its paper artillery resounding through all the parishes of Scotland—rumbling along the mountain sides and penetrating into the low-lying valleys. Tracts, pamphlets, dreams even, were brought into play. Not a vacant parish was left undisturbed for a day. Agitators flocked into it from every quarter, and the wrongs of the parishioners were so eloquently depicted that they themselves were moved to tears at the story of oppressions they had not until then known they had suffered. The other was more calm, and acted chiefly on the defence. To the side of the High Church party was attracted the greater part of the chapel ministers who had been illegally admitted into the Church Courts. It would have been strange had it been otherwise. They owed their official existence in the Church Courts to an illegal Act, passed by the party to which they now adhered, and they therefore, as a body, supported pretensions whose defeat would end their parochial life. It was by the assistance given by the *quoad sacra* ministers in the inferior Church Courts that the dominant party was able to pack

the General Assembly for some years, leading to the belief that it formed the majority of the Church of Scotland—a belief shown to be erroneous when the secession took place. Many of the *quoad sacra* ministers had belonged to the old seceding bodies. To be a parish minister has been a laudable ambition on the part of young men in Scotland, and the power by a stroke of the pen to erect parishes, although these were only *quoad sacra*, was made use of to induce these dissenting ministers to join the Church of Scotland. If they were not real parish ministers, they were a good imitation; they were useful in voting on measures, and looked well in statistical tables. Nor was much scruple shown by the non-intrusion party as to the means used for obtaining the property of the religious denominations to which the new adherents had belonged. One of these transactions became notorious under the name of the Campbelton case, it being shown at the trial, which resulted from the attempt to alienate property belonging to the Relief Church, that secret intrigues were carried on by the leaders of what was afterwards the Free Church; that Lord Moncrieff decided in favour of his friends; that Drs. Chalmers, Cunningham and Candlish, Mr. Alexander Dunlop, their law adviser, and others, subscribed largely, organized committees and strained every nerve to destroy the dissenting bodies in Scotland, by the most extraordinary misinterpretations of the law, held to be correct by Lord Moncrieff, but afterwards reversed on appeal. The official organ of the dissenting bodies in Scotland, referring to these and other attempts of a like nature, says editorially: "We have ground of complaint against the leading men who now belong to the Free Church. "We complain of their heartless attempts to destroy the Christian "privileges and liberties of all the dissenting churches in Scotland, "and that too when they were contending so strenuously for the "supremacy of the Redeemer's crown in the Church with which they "were connected ..... It is our opinion that the Free Church "is more sectarian than any of the larger Christian denominations "in Scotland. When they were the non-intrusion section, after the "voluntary controversy had commenced, they would hold no religious intercourse with those who did not belong to the establish-

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“ ment. They broke up schools and schemes of benevolence—  
“ missionary societies, foreign and domestic—prayer meetings—  
“ because they would not associate with any who advocated the  
“ voluntary principle. And now that they are the Free Church  
“ dissenters, they will hold no religious association with those who  
“ belong to an establishment. They refuse to meet with them upon  
“ the same platform, and to advocate the cause of the London Mis-  
“ sionary Society. They will give no assistance to a series of public  
“ lectures for the intellectual and moral improvement of young men,  
“ if the list of lecturers be tainted by the addition of a single name  
“ of an established minister. Nay, an instance came under our obser-  
“ vation a short time ago, of a Free Church minister refusing to pray  
“ at a funeral, solely because an established minister was requested  
“ to officiate at one of the services. Free Church sectarianism is  
“ throwing all our catholic societies into derangement, and in every  
“ proposed public movement for good, one of the first questions  
“ started is this: ‘ Will the Free Church go along with you, if you  
“ invite Christian men of every denomination to co-operate with  
“ you in your benevolent scheme? ’ ”

It has been necessary to enter into these details in order to show the composition of the non-intrusion party, that the motives for taking the stand they did may be understood, and also to explain the apparent sacrifice of their livings made by many who in reality sacrificed only a nominal position. The extracts from the organ of the dissenting body, which would naturally have sympathised with the latest seceders from the Church of Scotland, will show the tone and temper displayed by them in their intercourse with their brethren, and will enable some, at least, to see clearly the violent temper displayed and the reason for the little success which attended the efforts of those who counselled moderation. Many attendant circumstances arose which served to distract attention from the real question at issue. In reality the whole dispute was involved in the two points I have named, namely, the enactment of the Veto Law and the assumption of power to give seats in the Church Courts to an indefinite number of men, who legally had no such right. Other questions no doubt branched out from these,

but they lay at the root of the matter, which in turn sprang from the old claim of ecclesiastical domination and irresponsibility.

How little they cared for the rights of the people, and how much for the power of the clergy, is very clearly brought out in the course of the negotiations with the different Governments which were in power. Offers were repeatedly made to extend the powers of the people, but refused by the clergy, who demanded that the power of the Church should be increased. In a letter written by Mr. Alexander Dunlop, a strenuous supporter of the irresponsibility of the clergy, and dated 4th May, 1842, he says: "So far as I have been able to judge of the sentiments and feelings of statesmen, I think their hostility to the Church's independence is far more intense and inveterate than their hostility to the people having a voice, and most of them would willingly barter the latter for the former—i.e., acknowledge it if we would give up the other." The truth is, the strongest adherents of the non-intrusion party were the inveterate Tories, who had a thorough contempt for popular rights, and it was only after their attempts to override these had been defeated, that they became the thorough-going Liberals they have since become. Nothing like a convert for zeal! The ablest and most liberal statesmen of the country, who tried to remove the grievances complained of by the clergy, were compelled to declare that their duty to the community at large prevented them from granting the demands made. Sir Robert Peel stated in the House of Commons that, if the rights of the subject could be maintained consistently with the demands of the Church, he would be induced to make almost any concession to obtain tranquillity. But, he added, if the House of Commons is prepared to depart from those principles on which the Reformation was founded, and which principles are essential to the maintenance of the civil and religious liberties of the country, nothing but evil would result; the greatest evil of which would be the establishment of religious domination, which would alike endanger the religion of the country and the civil rights of man.

It has been absolutely necessary to give this sketch of the position of affairs; otherwise what has taken place in Canada would be unintelligible. In the sketch which follows, I will restrict

myself, as far as possible, to the facts as set forth in the "Proceedings of the Synod" recorded at the time, supplementing this, however, with such information as is necessary to make the facts intelligible, clothing the bare, dry bones of Synod Minutes with flesh and skin, and giving them such measure of life as is possible to one who lacks the divine afflatus which is able to bestow the martyr's crown on the keen-eyed ecclesiastic thirsting for power, and to transform the eager and bitter claimant for more despotic privileges to his order, into the self-denying champion for the people's liberties.

## II.

## THE SCHISM IN CANADA.

It could not be expected that the claims set up and the discussions that had arisen in the Church of Scotland could pass unobserved by the ministers in Canada. In 1841, the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland resolved to petition Her Majesty and the Imperial Parliament, in support of all the *just rights and claims* of the Church of Scotland, and that the secular Courts be prevented from all interference with the *spiritual* concerns of the Church. It was a very guarded and cautious petition, and one not likely to lead to much difference of opinion. But the very tone of the language used, guarded as it is, affords in itself a strong proof of the nature of the statements circulated by the non-intrusion party, and what efforts were made to poison the minds of men everywhere, and to blind them as to the true character of the struggle that was taking place. In 1842, the Synod sent a message of sympathy to the Church of Scotland in the course taken. To what took place in 1843 I shall afterwards refer. In 1844, the following resolutions were unanimously agreed to, with the exception of the one to which the name of the dissentient is marked.

"The adherents of the Church in this Province have ample liberty in the election of their ministers.

"There has been no interference whatever, on the part of the Civil Powers, with any of our Ecclesiastical Courts.

"There is not at present, so far as can be reasonably judged, any prospect of such interference with the Ecclesiastical Courts."

From this resolution Mr. Gale dissented.

"There is no external or legal let or hindrance to the extension of the Church in this Province.

"Therefore, the *alleged causes of disruption at home do not exist here*;" and to this, as to the others, are appended the words, "Agreed to by all."

These resolutions were passed on the 4th of July, 1844. Two days after, in the face of a deliberate statement, agreed to unanimously after long discussion, that "the alleged causes of disruption at home do not exist here," a motion was made by Mr. Bayne, seconded by Mr. Gale, that the Synod shall declare "that the peculiar connection which has hitherto subsisted between them and the Established Church of Scotland shall from this time forth cease and determine, and that any peculiar privileges that may have been understood to belong in virtue of that connection to her ministers and elders seeking admission into this church shall, in like manner, be withdrawn." The motion was rejected, 20 ministers and 20 elders having voted in support of it. These 40 members of the Synod had come to the conclusion on the 4th of July, after solemn and protracted deliberation, that "the alleged causes of disruption at home do not exist here," yet on the 9th of July, five days after, they needlessly and causelessly, themselves being witnesses, rent asunder that branch of the Church of Christ with which they had been connected, and which had then, and has had ever since, the utmost freedom.

Being defeated, the minority withdrew, and, imitating the example set by the malcontents in Scotland, they left behind a protest, as the foundation of the new ecclesiastical body. It was the sole *raison d'être* of their separate existence ; it has never been withdrawn ; it is still regarded as vital by those who adhere to the organization formed by the action of those who formulated it and laid it on the table of the Synod from which they withdrew, and its terms have repeatedly been invoked by many of the members of the seceding body as presenting a barrier to any Union with the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland. By that protest every member of the latter Church is branded as unfaithful to the Great Head of the Church ; as being, to put it in plain terms, no Christian at all, and as out of the pale of salvation. If the members of that Church consent to its annihilation as a separate religious body, they acknowledge that all the charges in the protest were well founded ; that the Church and all its ministers, members and adherents have been for all these years guilty of disowning Christ ; that she has in reality been

no Church at all, but simply a collection of individuals making a mockery of religion ; that the Church of Scotland, which has, ever since the disruption, now thirty years ago, been actively, faithfully and efficiently doing the great work laid on her to do, has during that period been nothing but a moral pestilence which ought to be removed. Are the members of the branch of the Church of Scotland in Canada prepared to acknowledge this ? Are they prepared to brand with shame and dishonour not only their own names, but the names of the great and good men who have done so much and so faithfully to carry the Gospel into all the ends of the earth ? But, we are told, this is a mere historical document ; it is thirty years old, and most of the men who signed it, or took part in the proceedings which led to it, are dead ! Take the same view of the foundations of Christianity and see to what it would lead. The Bible is a series of historical documents ; the great central point towards which our faith is directed is to be found in a scene which took place in Judea nearly nineteen hundred years ago ; all the men who took part in the events of these days are gone. Would any man pretend to say we must give up our hold of the "historical documents" which relate to these facts, and join the "Free Religious movement," whose blasphemous supporters met lately in New York, on the ground set forth as an argument for blotting our Church out of existence ? The argument could not stand for a moment.

What does the Protest say ? It charges the Church of Scotland with corruption and with yielding to the dictation of the State, and stigmatises as false to their vows all who adhere to the Church, which the authors of the Protest had a few days before declared there was no cause for leaving. It says that the Church in Canada "was bound to testify against the defections and cor-  
"ruptions of the Church of Scotland ; that the due and proper tes-  
"timony against the defections and corruptions of the said Estab-  
"lished Church of Scotland was a termination of the peculiarly  
"close and intimate connection in which the Synod stood to her." It then goes on to say that the Church in Canada "is lending the  
"weight of her influence to the support of principles which are in-  
"compatible with the purity and liberty of any Church, and which

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"are fitted to do grievous injury to the cause of the Redeemer throughout the world." It further states, that "by leaving an open door for the admission of ministers and elders from the Church of Scotland, holding unsound views on the great principles aforesaid, they have most seriously endangered the purity of the Church, and brought even her independence into peril, through the probable introduction of office bearers, prepared to submit to the same encroachments of the civil powers by which the Church of Scotland has been enslaved." Further, it declares that "sin in matters fundamental has been done by this Court," and that those who make this Protest "can no longer with a clear conscience hold office in the Presbyterian Church of Canada, in connection with the Church of Scotland."

It was hoped that when the evil influences that had been used to break up the Church had been withdrawn, the schismatics would return to the Church they had left. Accordingly, in September, 1844, two months after the Protest had been left, a committee of Synod was appointed to confer with the seceding brethren. Finding, however, at the conference which took place, that the sentiments unequivocally expressed by the "seceding brethren in regard to the Church of Scotland, were such that the committee concluded to hold them as a bar to all negotiations, *in limine*, the conference terminated."

The nature of the steps taken by the seceders in Scotland to break up the Church here, may be seen by the remonstrance addressed by the Synod to the Moderator of that body. I make no apology for the length of the extracts. The remonstrance begins: "We, the Ministers and Elders of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, in connection with the Church of Scotland, in Synod assembled, feel ourselves constrained by an imperativesense of duty to ourselves, and to the people under our care, to address to your Church a few words of remonstrance, respecting the course of conduct which you have pursued towards the Presbyterian Church in this country." The following extracts will show the grievances complained of: "Amid many difficulties and privations, we were engaged in the peaceful prosecution of our labours in this extensive region. In such circumstances we should natu-

“rally have expected, from all churches professing the same faith, “every possible encouragement and assistance. It was, therefore, “with much surprise and regret that we observed, in some of the “organs of the Free Church, expressions of a desire to produce, or “at least to countenance, a disruption in our Synod, and division “and strife among our congregations. We were, for a time, willing “to ascribe this to ignorance of our condition, or to a want of “due consideration of the position of our Church; but from the sub- “sequent conduct of the Free Church in publishing and sending out “letters, addresses, and other documents calculated to excite the “feelings of our people, and commissioning deputations for the same “purpose, we are compelled, however unwillingly, to conclude, that “there exists a desire on the part of the leaders of that Church to “disturb and distract the congregations under our care. We cannot “regard such conduct as wise, generous or Christian. \* \* \*

“We certainly had a right to expect, that before being accused “of acting from unworthy motives and exposed to unjust censures, “both here and in Scotland, as being indifferent or hostile to the “Redeemer’s cause, we should have been, at the very least, request- “ed, in a calm and Christian manner, to state the reasons for our “conduct.

“We cannot but feel ourselves deeply aggrieved, when we see “charges which we must characterise as reckless and unwarrantable, “brought against those who, to say the least, have been as faithful “and laborious in the service of the Lord, as they who bring forward “such allegations; men who have borne the burden and heat of the “day, who have spent years of ill-requited labour in gathering in “those who, but for their exertions, would have been strangers to the “means of grace. \* \* Why should the late division in our Synod, “—a division which may justly be termed *the most perfectly un-  
called for, the most utterly unaccountable schism which ever took  
place in the Church of Christ*,—be encouraged and perpetuated by “your influence, instead of being healed, as it might possibly be, by “your interposition? Why should the able and zealous mission- “aries you send among us exert their energies in endeavouring to “distract, that is, to destroy our settled congregations, instead of “carrying the message of salvation into those numerous places of

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"our land where a preacher's voice is seldom heard ? \* \* \* \*  
"We are fully convinced, that it would conduce to your honour  
"and advantage, no less than to our peace and welfare, to adopt a  
"course of conduct more liberal, more conciliatory and more  
"Christian." So ended the first stage of the schism in Canada.

## III.

## ATTEMPTED PARRICIDE.

In tracing the subsequent steps toward a re-union, proposals for which, it must be borne in mind, have always come from a small section of the Church of Scotland in Canada, it is necessary to revert to what took place in 1843. Two figures are conspicuous in urging a union with the seceding brethren. The one, that of Dr. Cook, of Quebec; the other, that of Dr. George, professor in Queen's College, now deceased. I desire to attribute to these reverend leaders of the Church no motives but such as are honourable to them, but if the reason for the *apparent* anxiety for union exhibited by the Church to which they belonged is to be arrived at, the part they have taken cannot be left out of sight. At Toronto, in July, 1843 (previous to the secession), a resolution was moved by Mr. Stark, seconded by Dr. George, expressing in the strongest possible terms the warmest sympathies of the Synod with the Free Church, "on account of the inestimable principles they "contend for;" and it continues, "they excite our highest admiration and gratitude for the almost unappreciable sacrifices, not only "of interest but of feeling, in the noble struggle which they have "maintained, and in the noble stand which they have taken against "encroachments on their spiritual functions," and so on, and pledging the Synod "to express solemnly and openly their support of "the great general views entertained by the seceding parties," &c. Dr. Cook, on the same occasion, moved a resolution setting forth the solemn testimony of the Synod on behalf of the claims set up by the Free Church; the pain and alarm felt by the Synod at the conduct of the supreme authorities of the State, in rejecting the claims recently made by the Church of Scotland; and the Synod, it goes on to say, "do hereby record their deep and affectionate "sympathy with those of her rulers and members who, leaving the "Establishment at the bidding of conscience, have thereby sacrificed temporal interests and personal feelings," &c.

At Kingston, in July, 1844, Dr. Cook moved, seconded by Dr. George, a series of resolutions, one clause of which was, "that it is expedient to abstain for the present from any correspondence with "the Parent Church." Dr. George subsequently became Professor of Systematic Theology in Queen's College, and it is no imputation on his character to say, that with the views he entertained of the ecclesiastical struggle in Scotland, it was impossible for him to give other impressions regarding the claims made and rejected, than that they were just and well founded. Full credence must be given to the assertions of those students who, even before obtaining their licence, were strong advocates for union, that Dr. George did not attempt to influence them. Consciously, it may be, he did not, but after he had openly moved in the matter; after his public expressions of opinion, it is difficult to see how the exertion of a certain amount of influence could be avoided. During the sessions of 1858-9 and of 1859-60, Dr. Cook acted as Principal of Queen's College. I have no intention of using the argument *post hoc ergo propter hoc*, but simply desire to give events in the order of their occurrence. In the latter year (1860), the Synod met at Kingston. On the day the Synod meeting came to an end, and within an hour or two of its closing, when the large majority of the members had left, Dr. George suddenly introduced an overture on the subject of Union with other Presbyterian bodies. It was moved by Mr. George Bell, that a Committee consisting of Dr. George, who presented the overture, Dr. Cook and some others, "be appointed to consider the subject, and to be ready to meet "with brethren belonging to the other Synods, to ascertain their "views and feelings on the matter and report to next Synod." Under the circumstances, the motion was carried by a small majority, the question having come on nearly all unexpectedly, and several members voting in the affirmative without reflection. Mr. Bell appears to have gone alone to the seceding body, where he was received, naturally enough, with effusion, the seceders believing, as they had a perfect right to do, that the Synod of the Church of Scotland in Canada had come to sue for pardon and to atone for her sins in "lending the weight of her influence to the support "of principles incompatible with the purity and liberty of any

"church." They had never held out any hopes of reconciliation ; had made no overtures for re-union ; were, in fact, doing all they could to break up the congregations of the Church of Scotland in Canada, and they subsequently used the ill-advised, however well meant, proposals of Dr. George and his friends as an instrument for their own aggrandizement. The minute of the Synod of 1861, on the subject, reads as follows : "A document *purporting* to be "a report of the Committee on Union between this Church and the "Presbyterian Churches in the Province, and a minute of a meeting "purporting to be a meeting of the Committee on Union, were read." Why these terms were used will plainly appear by the resolution which follows : "It was moved by *Dr. Cook*, that Dr. George's "report be received, and that the thanks of the Synod be given to "Dr. George, for his attention to the business entrusted to him by "the Synod, *for his judicious conduct in calling to his aid, in AB-* "SENCE OF THE COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY THE SYNOD, *so many able* "and tried friends of the Church, and for so decidedly refraining from "committing himself or the Synod to any basis or terms of union, "while yet ascertaining that there was a friendly spirit open to "further and more definite negotiation in the other Presbyterian "bodies in the Province ; appoint a Committee to prepare such basis "of union for this Church to agree to, and to receive any communica- "cation or overture on the subject of union which *may be sent* to "them from committees of other Presbyterian bodies," and so on. Next day the motion was discussed and rejected, an amendment that the Committee be not reappointed having been carried.

In Dr. Cook's motion, two points are noticeable. One, that the members of the Committee appointed by the Synod at the previous meeting, under the circumstances already stated, did not consider themselves authorized to do anything by virtue of the remit made to them, and Dr. George had, therefore, taken counsel with certain unnamed individuals, described in the motion as "able and tried friends of the Church." (To the minutes of the seceding body I am indebted for a knowledge of the fact that Mr. Bell alone appeared before them.) The other is, that no movement whatever had been made by the other Presbyterian bodies towards reconciliation.

The Church had been growing steadily up till this time, and as the funds in the hands of the Temporalities' Board were limited, the new ministers added to the roll had no prospect of any assistance from that source. It being found that the new and outlying settlements, which it was the duty of the Church to occupy, were suffering from the want of Gospel ordinances, the people being necessarily poor and requiring help for a time, it was resolved to raise a permanent "Home Mission Fund." Deputations visited many of the congregations in the eastern part of Upper Canada (now Ontario), and settled charges in Lower Canada (now Quebec). The result was most encouraging. In the partial returns presented in the report to the Synod of 1860, it was shown that in a comparatively small number of congregations nearly \$22,000 had been subscribed, and that that sum would be very greatly increased when the year's returns had been received; that local committees had been formed, and that a very large amount would be raised for planting new churches. In addition to this, the collections for the "Contingent Account," the fund for meeting current charges, had not only not fallen off, but had, on the contrary, never before been nearly so liberal. The report for 1861 showed a still further and very considerable addition to the permanent fund. But all these hopes, which were to a great extent realities, for the hearts of the people had been stirred, were dashed to the ground. Under the plea that the annual revenue did not meet the annual expenditure, the permanent fund for missionary work was encroached upon; the subscriptions for St. Andrew's Church, in the City of Quebec, amounting to upwards of \$10,000, were frittered away; the collections for the "Contingent Account" were not made by many of the friends of union; the local agencies, which had been well organized, and were effective, were discouraged, and a damp thrown over the adherents of the Church. The reiterated demands on the part of a small fraction of the ministers of the Church to put an end to her existence were telling with most disastrous effect, for the people, uncertain of the future, which but a short time before looked so bright, had become chilled in their efforts, not knowing to what they would lead.

The weakness produced by discouraging every effort at extension has ever since been made use of as an argument for the annihilation of the Church. On the part of the great bulk of pastors and people, there has been no desire—there is not now any desire—to have her blotted out of existence. Beyond the small knot of union men, those who now submit to what they believe to be the inevitable, do so from a feeling of dull despair at the future of a Church which, freed from the constant irritation to which it is exposed, would be active, energetic—a living, moving, growing body. When it was proposed to send missionaries to British Columbia, the members of the Union party opposed the suggestion, and it fell to the ground; when the propriety of forming charges in Manitoba and the North-West was urged, the Union party assented to it, but on the condition that the minister sent should be placed under the control of the other Presbyterian body, and so for the time the work was effectually killed. After long delay, a minister was sent, but so well had the spirit of the members of Synod been killed, that the party in, but scarcely of, the Church was suffered to instruct him that he was to report to the denomination which had denounced the members of the Church they had left as faithless to their vows. As a sequel to the melancholy story, the convener of the Committee appointed to carry on the mission to Manitoba, in his report published in October, recommends that the Church to which he professes to belong should abandon the field, because it was already occupied by other Presbyterians! These are but instances out of many which could be cited. Is it not time that those who really belong to the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland should enquire what is the cause of the weakness which they deplore as inevitable? Let them reverse the treatment of the Sangrados who are bleeding the Church to death, and return to a more rational system. The people are willing to do what is required, but if they are constantly in dread of changes can they be expected to work with any heart for the advancement of a Church threatened with extinction?

There is a falling off in the colleges of the students for the Ministry. How can it be otherwise? The branch of the Church of

Scotland in Canada has always regarded, and with reason, an educated clergy as indispensable for the prosecution of the work devolving on them. And at this time more especially is an educated ministry required. A scientific infidelity, spreading everywhere by the universal diffusion of literature, has taken the place of gross and ignorant atheism. Yet the other Presbyterian bodies in this country have been, by their rules, reducing the standard of education required ; have reduced it still further by their practice ; have even admitted to ordination men who have not been trained at all. Is it probable that young men will enter Queen's or Morrin College, to spend laborious years in striving to qualify themselves for their profession, when they are practically told by the very professors that they may as well save themselves the trouble, as in the course of a year or two they will stand on no higher a level than those who have made no such effort ?

There are not ministers coming forward to fill the vacant charges. What is this but one of the effects springing from the same cause ? Men will not attach themselves to a decaying institution—one which they hear constantly proclaimed by its leaders as about to pass out of existence. It is well known to many, that a number of the best men belonging to the other Presbyterian body would have preferred to join the Church of Scotland in Canada. But why, they argued, should they become members of a Church about to be absorbed by another, when they could at once enter into communion with the more vigorous body, greatly as they might dislike much with which they would be brought into contact ?

There is something in the other Presbyterian body which is wanting in the Church of Scotland in Canada. That may be affirmed with all confidence. There is a unity of purpose ; an aggressive spirit ; a determination on the part of the leaders of the other Church not to acknowledge weakness. These elements of success are wanting, thanks to the constant, unremitting work of a small party within the fold. The Canada Presbyterian Church is willing enough to listen to proposals for union ; but with them that means the abolition, the blotting out, of the branch of the Church of Scotland here. They have heaped insult after in-

sult upon her, but "retract! no, not a hairbreadth!" They have disturbed and distracted the minds of congregations, and done everything to break them up; but "they are men of peace, and "there need be no misunderstanding—if you quietly withdraw "out of our road."

There are other causes of weakness which might be pointed out, but those who pursue the investigation searchingly will be at no loss to discover them.

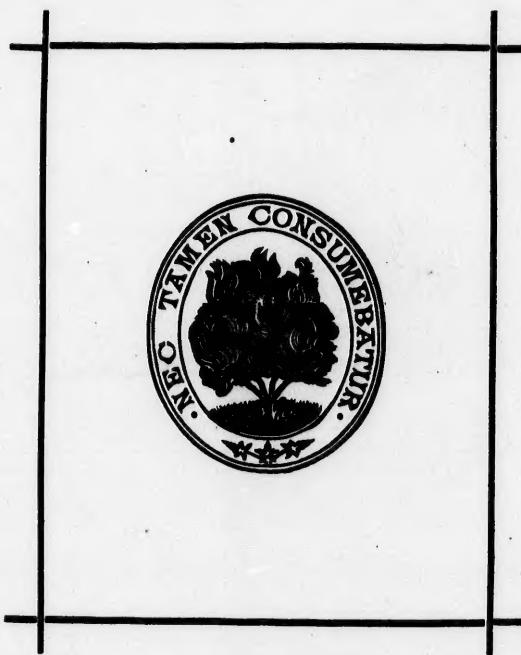
It may assist some to arrive at a definite conclusion as to the course they intend to follow, if they bear in mind that even should a majority of the Synod decide to sever their connection with the Church of Scotland, there will still be left behind a fair number of ministers and adherents fully equipped for the work of the Church, with colleges, with an endowment fund, with church buildings, with a prosperous ministers', widows' and orphans' fund. To those who have watched, calmly or otherwise, with a full knowledge of the legal rights of parties, the proceedings of what *purport* to be meetings of Committees on Union, it has been amusing to see them differing in opinion about the disposal of funds; quarrelling, almost to the point of breaking off negotiations, about the position the colleges are to occupy; negotiating about the manner in which the Church they were about to enter was to raise funds commensurate with those brought in by the new adherents. Diplomacy may be regarded with admiration when it is seen employed by skilled diplomatists engaged in settling weighty questions of reality. When these gentlemen are busily engaged in discussions analogous to the carrying of water in sieves, they are apt to be looked at in a ridiculous light. To the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland belong the whole machinery and equipments now held in her name. Relieved from the incubus that has weighed on their energies, the adherents of that Church will proceed to the work given them to do, earnestly, faithfully, vigorously. They may, no doubt will, have their days of trial; they may, no doubt will, be calumniated, misrepresented, maligned; but their duty is plainly set before them, and to that duty they will devote themselves, no matter how many or how few of them

are left. The days of darkness and of trial are but the prelude to a great and glorious future, if faith to lay hold of the promises be only given to the members of the PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CANADA IN CONNECTION WITH THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.









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